

ACIH Response to NCCIH Request For Information March 2021

We thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback during the July Request For Information, and applaud the incorporation of multiple areas we had highlighted in the new 2021-2025 draft strategic plan. We focus our attention for this feedback to one area - *Objective 4: Enhance the complementary and integrative health research workforce*. In July's feedback we encouraged NCCIH to add a core objective that promotes partnerships and collaboration between Complementary and Integrative Health (CIH) Institutions that train CIH professionals, and conventional medical schools. Recommendations from the [NACCIH Feb 5th, 2016 Working Group Report on Clinician-Scientist Workforce Development](#) include: "The Working Group considered its charge against a research landscape that has evolved and continues to do so in multiple ways—including the importance of partnerships and teams across an array of fields, professions, and disciplines." The Report went on to state that "One approach that has worked well and should continue to be explored . . . , is the funding of partnerships." It was suggested that NCCIH "Incentivize all research institutions to include complementary and integrative health professionals and disciplines in their research enterprises."

While section 4.2 of the 2021 draft plan outlines the exploration of virtual collaborative models, we would like to see increased focus on initiatives that support/require a co-appointed member of a CIH institution as a member of the research team, including an expectation for a Co-Principal Investigator based in the partnered CIH institution. Additionally, we would encourage NCCIH to provide enhanced research conference support for CIH profession researchers. For instance, emerging professions that encompass whole systems of care, such as somatic movement would benefit greatly from NCCIH Research Conference grants which provide a platform for these professions to advance research capacity.

A second area of attention in *Objective 4* is regarding Section 4.1 of the 2021 draft plan. This section addresses the need to include underrepresented groups in NCCIH sponsored research. We encourage the NCCIH to consider minority status be given to training award applicants that have CIH qualifications. This would increase the likelihood of these applicants successfully competing for these awards, and would improve the diversity of the CIH research workforce. Researchers with CIH qualifications provide critically important clinical experience relating to the real world practice and integration of CIH therapies. We suggest a priority for NCCIH, as *the Working Group recommendation states but which hasn't been fulfilled*, "that NCCIH consider offering opportunities for clinician-scientists from complementary and integrative health fields to obtain training and career support." This specific language is not reflected in the current draft plan.

To summarize, ACIH sees two key areas for improvement in this draft plan: 1) enhance the language surrounding collaborative models to ensure that professions from CIH academic centers are included as collaborative partners on NCCIH-funded work, and 2) reframe training opportunities for the CIH workforce to include CIH professions as underrepresented professions. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to comment on the draft plan, we look forward to continued dialogue with NCCIH.